

Contact offices in the following areas:

Region 1 OFCL

1313 Atlantic, Suite 2000
Spokane, WA 99201
(509) 363-3488

(Chelan, Douglas, Ferry, Stevens,
Okanagon, Pend Oreille, Spokane,
Lincoln, Grant, Adams, Whitman
counties)

Region 2 OFCL

1002 N. 16th Avenue
Yakima, WA 98909
(509) 225-6570

(Kittitas Yakima, Benton, Franklin,
Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield,
Asotin counties). Klickitat

Region 3 OFCL

840 N. Broadway, Building B, #540
Everett, WA 98201
(425) 339-2961

(Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish,
Island, San Juan counties).

Region 4 OFCL

2809 26th Avenue S.
Seattle, WA 98144
(206) 721-6610

(Seattle, North King County,
Bellevue, Bothell, Burien,
Kirkland, Renton, Kent, Auburn
and vicinity)

Region 5 OFCL

1949 S. State Street
Tacoma, WA 98405
(253) 983-6434

(Pierce, Kitsap counties)

Region 6 OFCL

6860 Capitol Blvd. S., Bldg. #342
Tumwater, WA 98504
(360) 725-6765

(Clallam, Jefferson, Grays
Harbor, Mason, Pacific, Lewis,
Wahkiakum, Cowlitz, Thurston,
Skamania, Clark, counties)

Who do I call if I have further concerns?

Children's Administration Constituent Relations	1-800-723-4831
Office of the Family & Children's Ombudsmen	1-800-571-7321
Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect	1-866-EndHarm

DSHS 22-598(X) (Rev. 2/03)



Introduction to Foster Parenting

Answers to some frequently asked questions
about foster parenting

Please staple or tape when mailing.

FROM:

STAMP



Introduction to Foster Parenting

Thank you for your interest in becoming a foster parent. This brochure is designed to answer some of your basic questions about foster parenting and provide you with information we hope you will find helpful as you consider this important phase in your life.

What is foster care?

Foster care is the temporary placement of children with families or individuals outside of their own homes into licensed homes due to child abuse or neglect. The goal of foster care is to provide for the physical, emotional and social needs of children in a “substitute” family setting until the child’s own family can be reunited. Some children may ultimately be placed for adoption.

Who are the children needing foster care?

Children who are temporarily separated from their families due to abuse or neglect may include:

- School age children who need extra help feeling good about themselves and getting along with others;
- Infants who have special feeding and medical needs;
- Brothers and sisters who should stay together;
- Children with developmental or physical disabilities;
- Children with emotional problems;
- Children who need families that are sensitive to and respectful of their culture;
- Teenagers who have not experienced positive family life and now need extra patience and commitment.

All foster children are affected by the separation from their family and sometimes this stress and worry shows up in their behavior. Some children have never learned to live within the usual routines of family life and will need extra amounts of understanding and patience.

Who are foster families?

Foster families are people who enjoy parenting and who are willing to share their homes, time, energy and love with children who have special needs because of abuse or neglect.

Whether you are an older adult or a younger adult, single or married, a working or a stay-at-home parent, a home owner or renter, there may be a place for you on our foster care team if you can:

- Make a commitment to be a meaningful person in a child's life without making a lifetime commitment to the child;
- Respect children and their primary attachment to their families;
- Demonstrate that you are a creative problem solver, have listening skills, flexibility and a sense of humor;
- Manage your family finances with the addition of another child and the agency's amount of reimbursement for room, board, clothing and medical care; and
- Participate in orientation meetings and training sessions about your new parenting role.

You can become a foster parent if you:

- Are 21 years of age or older;
- Do not have disqualifying criminal history or a history of founded child abuse and neglect;
- Are single, married, divorced, gay or lesbian, or widowed;
- Have a regular source of income to meet your own family's needs;
- Complete the required number of hours of Foster Care & Adoptive Parent Pre-service Training;
- Complete CPR/First Aid and HIV/AIDs awareness training;
- Are free from Tuberculosis (TB)
- Have your home inspected to meet minimum licensing requirements;
- Participate in a home study (assessment) of your entire family;
- Are willing to meet with a social worker to determine if fostering is appropriate for you and your family.

Is financial assistance available?

Yes, foster parents will receive a set monthly reimbursement based on the child's age. These funds are for child-care related costs such as food, clothing and housing. In addition, each child will have medical and dental coverage while in care.

How long will it take to become licensed?

From the time we receive an application, we attempt to complete the licensing process within 90 days to fully license you for foster care.

How long do foster children stay in a foster home?

It depends on the particular child and the parent’s situation. Every effort is made to reunite parents and children; sometimes a child may live with you for a few days or for several months. Many foster parents grow close to the children in their care. It can be difficult when they leave. Foster parents can - and many do - adopt children that come into their lives through the foster care system.

Can a foster child share a bedroom with my child?

Yes. However, they must have a separate bed of their own and children of the opposite sex can only share a room if they are under the age of six years. A bedroom must also have room for storage of a foster child's personal belongings.

A PERSONAL DECISION:

- Foster parenting is not right for everyone, but is it right for you? While not an easy decision to make, we hope you will explore and evaluate the concept thoroughly.
- For more information or a schedule of up-coming foster parent Orientation & Pre-Service Training classes, please call the number in your area noted on the back page of this brochure.